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Eastern District of California**

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SALINAS MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN CONNECTION WITH FRAUDULENT TAX REFUND SCHEME

FRESNO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced that on September 29, 2008, RAFAEL MANZO, 51, of Salinas, Calif., pleaded guilty to four counts of making and presenting false claims in connection with the filing of false tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service. He then fraudulently received the resulting refund checks.

This case was the product of an extensive investigation by the IRS Criminal Investigation Division.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Sheila K. Oberto and Mark McKeon, who are prosecuting the case, MANZO admitted that during the period from January 2002 through December 2003, he submitted false 1040 Individual Income Tax Returns to the IRS. He used names, social security numbers, and dates of birth for deceased individuals to prepare the tax returns. MANZO also admitted that these tax returns contained false Forms W-2 that claimed fraudulent wages and withholdings, thereby making the alleged taxpayer eligible for a tax refund. He then used post office boxes and residence addresses to which he had access to receive refund checks, and deposited the tax refund checks into his bank account or cashed them.

MANZO is scheduled to be sentenced on December 19, 2008.

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